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UNCLAS MUSCAT 001939

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR NEA/ARPI; NEA/PPD (CWHITTLESEY); OES/IHA
AMMAN FOR EST HUB

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: HOUSE CALL ON GENETIC RESEARCH

Summary

1. (SBU) On December 13, the Ambassador received a delegation of four geneticists from Harvard Medical School and their colleague from the Omani Ministry of Health. The group discussed their collaborative research into the genetic mutations that are causing such a high incidence of neurological disorders in the Omani populace, and expressed their hope of founding a research clinic in Oman to stop the spread of such mutations. End Summary.

Putting On a Clinic

2. (SBU) Dr. Anna Rajab of the Omani Ministry of Health and four colleagues from Harvard Medical School - Dr. Christopher Walsh, Adria Bodell, Seung-Yun Soo, and Ganesh Moshida - paid a courtesy call on the Ambassador to inform him of their desire to open a research clinic in the Sultanate. Dr. Rajab noted that there are 3,000 new cases of disabilities each year in Oman caused by genetic defects. She mentioned that Dr. Walsh would be visiting the town of Rustaq, where one family has suffered ten cases of cerebral palsy due to genetic defect. Dr. Walsh added that research in Oman could deepen understanding of cerebral palsy in the United States.

3. (SBU) In response to Ambassador's query about the doctors' possible cooperation with Sultan Qaboos University, Dr. Rajab repeated several times that "I have nothing to learn from them." She recounted the university's difficulties in completing grant projects and training staff properly. The delegation from Harvard added that establishing a clinic was important because it could provide services, whereas a university center would be legally restricted to research.

Next Steps

4. (SBU) The delegation sought no specific assistance from the Ambassador, but wanted to inform him of their efforts. In response to the Ambassador's query, they promised to send him a concept paper for the clinic.

BALTIMORE